

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CASTLE
BROMWICH PARISH COUNCIL
HELD IN ARDEN HALL, CASTLE BROMWICH
ON WEDNESDAY 29TH OCTOBER 2008
AT 7.30 PM**

Those present:

Chairman: Cllr J Riordan

Councillors:	Cllr Mrs. P Allen	Cllr E Knibb	Cllr A Terry
	Cllr R Amos	Cllr Mrs. T Knibb	Cllr Miss J Ward
	Cllr Mrs. A Haywood	Cllr M Rashid	[Items 5-end]
		Cllr Mrs. J Smith	Cllr Mrs. B. Wilkins
		[Items 5-end]	

Officer: Mrs. C Tibbles

Guest Speaker: Mr. Lee Davis, Youth Worker (Worth Unlimited)

Public: 6 members of the public

1. Apologies.

None.

2. Declarations of pecuniary or other interests.

None declared.

3. To elect a Vice-Chairman.

The Chairman called for nominations and Cllr Mrs. Haywood nominated Cllr Mrs. Allen. There were no other nominations. **ON THE PROPOSITION OF** Cllr Mrs. Haywood, **SECONDED** by Cllr Mrs. Wilkins, **IT WAS UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED** that Cllr Mrs Allen be elected Vice-Chairman of the Parish Council for the remainder of the Civic Year 2008 - 2009. The Chairman presented the Vice-Chairman’s Badge of Office and members congratulated their new Vice-Chairman on her election.

4. Minutes of the previous Meeting.

ON THE PROPOSITION OF Cllr Rashid, **SECONDED** by Cllr Mrs. Knibb, **IT WAS RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the Meeting held on Wednesday 24th September, 2008 be accepted as a true and correct record of the Meeting.

5. Guest Speaker: Lee Davis, Youth Worker for Worth Unlimited.

The Chairman welcomed Mr. Davis to the meeting and invited him to report on the work of his organisation with young people. Mr. Davis gave a presentation explaining that Worth Unlimited worked through partnership and hoped the Parish Council would consider his proposals. Over the past 2 years the organisation had worked towards 3 aims – providing a range of different programmes, to enable local groups to act themselves, to manage specialized projects. It was hoped to unlock potential in young people and to build hope for a brighter future. Staff were undertaking accredited ABC awards and session leaders employed were usually local people. Consultations took place with young people and youth work often took place on Friday evenings, Saturdays and Sundays. Support had been given to St. Clements Church for the past 4/5 years and the aim was to create a “World Worth Living In”. Changes were now taking place at Park Hall School and he was building on outreach work done successfully in other schools. He suggested a youth café could be of benefit in Castle Bromwich.

ACTION

6. Questions from Councillors.

At the invitation of the Chairman, Cllr Mrs. Knibb asked when the St. Clement's project was open and Mr. Davis replied on Tuesday evenings. The Chairman asked about detached teams and Mr. Davis said that such a team had worked successfully in Chelmsley Wood in response to 'hot spot' problems. He felt it important to work with young people and not penalise them. He confirmed to the Chairman that his team would happily be guided by the Parish Council as to issues and 'hot spots' in Castle Bromwich. Cllr Mrs. Knibb raised a personal matter on behalf of her son and his friends who wanted to establish an internet radio station and Mr. Davis agreed to discuss this matter separately. The Chairman asked about young people who were not in school and Mr. Davis said that the Connections service identified other young people to his organisation.

7. Questions from the Public.

Standing Orders were suspended so that members of the public could ask questions. Following an explanation of procedures by the Chairman, members of the public were invited to state their name and address prior to asking their question. A summary of the questions asked is appended for members only as the final page and the meeting continued. At the conclusion of this item, the Chairman thanked Mr. Davis for the valuable work that his organisation was contributing to help young people.

8. Consultation by Solihull MBC on School Closures.

Members noted the formal request that had been submitted to the Parish Council and after discussion **IT WAS RESOLVED** that, as the schools were not within the parish boundary, concerns of some members about future loss of places for children and the opposition by some parents be noted.

Clerk
Reply by
24/11

9. Colebridge Trust – Extraordinary General Meeting.

Members considered the information from the Colebridge Trust and **IT WAS RESOLVED** to object to the proposal. Cllr Knibb would be attending the meeting, accompanied by Cllr Mrs. Knibb, who were both willing to represent the interests of Castle Bromwich if a new structure was agreed.

Clerk
Reply by 8/11

10. External Audit 2007/08.

Members noted the completion of the External Audit by Clement Keys and the correspondence brought to the attention of all members. The Clerk undertook to advertise the closure of the audit in the Castle Bromwich Gazette.

Clerk
21/11

11. Long Term Strategy for Arden Hall.

Cllr Mrs. Knibb gave a presentation to members with her interpretation of the results of the public consultation. She apologised that it was not comprehensive but members noted the history of the hall, the options to consider and the alternative (and changing) provision within the local community for hire facilities. Members noted the small response from parishioners and therefore felt it difficult to give weight to the views expressed. Some suggestions had been received for improvements to décor, sound proofing and kitchens but Cllr Mrs. Knibb reported there were no suggestions for new uses. The Chairman asked what members felt the position would be in both 5 and 10 years time? Cllr Mrs. Wilkins thought some of the new facilities at Park Hall School could be attractive to existing customers but felt the financial investment the school had received could not be competed with at Arden Hall. She felt that Arden Hall would not be needed in the longer-term future in its present form. Cllr Mrs. Smith agreed that a new school building with modern facilities and car parking could be

Castle Bromwich Parish Council

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attractive to hirers. Cllr Mrs. Knibb thought a new but smaller purpose built Arden Hall could have a different purpose and would be better with a different role in a different place. Cllr Mrs. Wilkins suggested a modern venue be provided for smaller groups (e.g. help the aged, wine club, friends associations, brownies, playgroups, guides, mother/baby). Cllr Mrs. Knibb thought Arden Hall was a difficult facility to manage and too big for the Parish Council to do properly which caused other community issues to be neglected. She also reminded members the Scouts had their own building and thought the Parish Council needed to decide what market they were pitching for. Cllr Amos struggled to see the need for a new building and felt that people were used to Arden Hall. When he had visited other buildings 2 years ago, for the Parish Council, it was hoped to improve and extend Arden Hall rather than reduce the facilities on offer. The Chairman thought that the opening of new Park Hall facilities would make a difference in the community and could affect Arden Hall. Cllr Amos felt that a better maintenance programme should have been in place many years ago but this could be rectified and worked on for the benefit of customers and parishioners now. He suggested reducing some prices and continuing the work being done to improve appearances. Cllr Mrs. Wilkins referred to the sudden closure of a 1960's building in Hodge Hill and felt that in 5/10 years the current building of Arden Hall would cease to exist. Cllr Mrs. Knibb said she had received a report from a chartered surveyor saying £100,000 would need to be spent to correct the structure of Arden Hall. The Chairman asked members if they would allow further participation by members of the public and no objections were made. Mr. Siviter warned there may not be good co-operation at Park Hall School and thought the majority of parishioners would want to remain at Arden Hall. He asked about the surveyor's report and Cllr Mrs. Allen welcomed this question, as she did not recall a report being brought to Council. Cllr Mrs. Knibb said it had been passed to her for the AMP Committee to consider by Cllr Feasey before he resigned. Mr. Woodhouse questioned the usage of the school by the community, prohibitive costs of some hire rates at Arden Hall and mentioned that church buildings operated by the Diocese were sometimes a cheaper option for some groups, although some were also being closed down. Cllr Mrs. Knibb thought that more research was needed before a clear decision could be made. Cllr Knibb added that the lack of response from parishioners was disappointing and urged for a decision to be made and published so that more views could then be received. He felt the majority of people would not want to pay to maintain Arden Hall if better facilities were available elsewhere, although Arden Hall was well used from the 1960's to 1980's it was not anymore. He felt it needed to be serviceable and viable. Cllr Mrs. Knibb thought that all parishioners paid towards providing the Hall and it was wrong for just a few to benefit. Cllr Amos believed Arden Hall was the cog of the community and that only a few months before both Cllr Knibb and Cllr Mrs. Knibb had actively encouraged the Council to promote and improve Arden Hall but now seemed defeated for some reason. Cllr Miss Ward thought Arden Hall should remain and was a focal point for the community for their parties, social events, community issues and entertainment. Cllr Mrs. Smith added the need for daytime community provision would remain as the school would not be available whilst pupils had lessons, although it would be difficult to compete with modern theatre facilities there. Cllr Mrs. Wilkins suggested a smaller facility be provided within the existing grounds and thought the economic climate would affect Arden Hall like others in the broader

Castle Bromwich Parish Council

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spectrum. Cllr Mrs. Haywood urged caution with the current economic markets and felt that many villagers would not migrate to Park Hall School. There may be extra sporting facilities but felt Arden Hall had a strong place in the community, even if that may be with a different focus in 5 years. For the next 2/3 years aesthetic improvements to the Hall would have to be made and suggested 10 years would be more realistic target for any possible change. Cllr Knibb asked how many of the 12,000 parishioners used the Hall, currently most visitors were retired with no customers in their 40's? As groups continued to close down, he thought the Council should assess what had to be provided and what activities could be done elsewhere, e.g. the Sports Pavilion. Cllr Mrs. Knibb felt that Park Hall School could not cater for all community needs and asked how often was the Hall full and how often was it completely empty? **ON THE PROPOSITION** of Cllr Mrs. Wilkins, **SECONDED** by the Chairman, **IT WAS RESOLVED** that in 10 years time Arden Hall should become a smaller purpose built modern building. 6 members voted in favour, 4 members voted against this proposal. 1 member abstained.

12. Roles for Councillors.

The Chairman invited views. Cllr Amos thought the priority should be finding new members. Cllr Mrs. Wilkins commended the idea of holding surgeries with members sharing a rota. Cllr Amos warned that advice could not be given but concerns noted and brought to Council for consideration. After discussion of the options **ON THE PROPOSITION** of Cllr Mrs. Wilkins, **SECONDED** by Cllr Knibb, **IT WAS RESOLVED** that monthly surgeries take place at Arden Hall in the Committee Room, preferably on the Saturday morning prior to Council meetings (dates subject to availability) with 2 members volunteering to work together. Appointments could be offered to parishioners via the Council Office. Cllr Mrs. Allen felt unable to support this initiative as she was fully committed to other projects. Cllr Mrs. Haywood asked about roles for members and **IT WAS UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED** that members continue as at present by supporting each other and the Clerk according to their availability, interests and experience.

13. Voluntary Workers/Friends of Arden Hall.

Cllr Mrs. Haywood reminded members that numerous volunteers were being used, some of them from the 'Friends', event though there was no formal co-ordinator for the group. After discussion **IT WAS RESOLVED** to continue as existing and to review the position when there was time/capacity for a member to become a co-ordinator. Cllr Mrs. Allen, Cllr Rashid and other members helped supervise volunteers, kept the Clerk informed and updated members at meetings with progress reports. Cllr Knibb said there was no direction but the Clerk felt she had to disagree.

14. Staff Panel.

Members noted the advice received and the proposition by Cllr Knibb. Cllr Mrs. Wilkins confirmed the need for a Staff Panel, which did already exist. The Chairman highlighted the NALC view that a sub-Committee should still give the public proper due notice of meetings for transparency and felt that such changes would not give any benefit. **ON THE PROPOSITION** of the Chairman, **IT WAS RESOLVED** in line with advice received that the Staff Panel Terms of Reference be amended to show their joint Line Manager responsibility for the Clerk and the Staff Panel duly consider how the Clerk should communicate emergency matters to them.

Castle Bromwich Parish Council

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15. Members' Allowances.

ON THE PROPOSITION of Cllr Mrs. Wilkins, **IT WAS RESOLVED** that no increase should be applied and the allowance remain as existing (£103 per civic year). It was noted that members did not currently pursue their claims although the option of donating an amount to the Chairman's Charity Fund remained.

16. Report of the Leisure Services Committee.

ON THE PROPOSITION of Cllr Mrs. Haywood, **SECONDED** by the Chairman, **IT WAS RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the Meeting of the Leisure Services Committee held on Wednesday, 1st October 2008, having been circulated, be received, approved and the recommendations contained therein be adopted.

17. Report of the Finance & General Purposes Committee.

ON THE PROPOSITION of the Chairman, **SECONDED** by Cllr Knibb, **IT WAS RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the Meetings of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on Wednesdays, 24th September and 8th October 2008, having been circulated, be received, approved and the recommendations contained therein be adopted.

18. Report and future meetings of Working Parties.

The Chairman reported that the Budget Working Party had met to review current income/expenditure, forecast year end figures and provisionally estimate future spending plans. Full reports would go to Committees in November. Dates were not set for any further meetings. Following discussion, **IT WAS RESOLVED** that Working Parties report to Committees in future as follows: Buildings and Village Green – Leisure Services Committee; Events to either Leisure Services Committee or Finance and General Purposes Committee depending on nature of report (Arden Hall event or Civic Event). Working Party reports would no longer appear on Council agendas unless it was an emergency matter.

19. Representatives to Outside Bodies.

Cllr Mrs. Allen reported that on Wednesday 10th September she had attended Castle Bromwich Hall Gardens for the presentation/celebration event to mark successful fundraising; on 11th September she had attended the Trustees meeting and AGM, again at Castle Bromwich Hall Gardens and on 15th September she had enjoyed attending the annual Apple Day event they had organised.

Cllr Knibb reported he had attended several meetings on behalf of the Parish Council but would submit his report to the Clerk by email later. As usual, he would be happy to expand on any of these details later if asked.

20. Report of the Officer of the Council.

The Clerk tabled details of an approach to the Parish Council for assistance from Mike Carrick, on behalf of Park Hall School, who was seeking volunteers from the local community to help move old furniture and pack it into containers prior to shipping to Africa. Members supported this request. A local businessman has expressed an interest in a long-term hire of business space for a new venture, which the council was happy to investigate further via the Leisure Services Committee, as it was important to utilise vacant space in buildings in this way and generate new income. With the help of some members, she reported progress has been made with Remembrance Parade, Christmas Carol Service/Tree Lighting and the planning application for Arden Hall to improve disabled access (doors and parking) and replace the frontage. Once planning

permission was granted, the work would need to be undertaken in phases, according to budgetary and logistical considerations. Finally, instructions had been issued by NALC (as tabled) giving details of the 2008/09 Interim Salary Award for Clerks and other staff in the absence of reaching an agreement. Members appreciated that arbitration could take some considerable time **IT WAS RESOLVED** to support the implementation of the revised rates and back pay (effective from 1st April, 2008) as soon as possible.

21. Report of the Chairman

The Chairman reported that a Chairman's Charity Quiz Night was being arranged for Friday 13th February 2009 and asked people to note the date. Reminders were given about Remembrance Parade and Service on 9th November and Christmas Carol Concert at Arden Hall on Tuesday, 25th November.